Appendix A. Public Hearing Handout

PUBLIC HEARING
SR 89A: CEMENT PLANT RD - BLACK HILLS DR
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project No. STP-089-A(002) | **TRACS No. 089A YV 349 H4129 01C** | **September 13, 2006**

Welcome to the public hearing for the proposed improvements to State Route (SR) 89A. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is conducting an evaluation for improvements to SR 89A between Cement Plant Road and Black Hills Drive/Verde Heights Drive. The primary purpose of tonight's hearing is to receive your input on the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). The Draft EA describes and quantifies the environmental impacts that may result from the construction of the proposed roadway widening.

The agenda for tonight's public hearing is as follows:

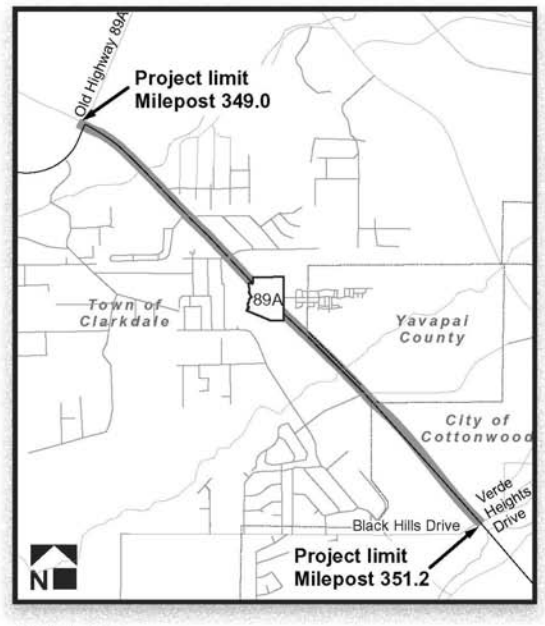
- There will be a short presentation at 6:15 pm tonight summarizing the project's background and describing the Preferred Alternative and its potential environmental consequences.
- After the presentation, we will have a brief question-and-answer session to respond to any general questions that you may have about the proposed improvements.
- After the question-and-answer session, you will have an opportunity to make your comments on the Draft EA either to the court reporter or on the comment sheet. The Project Team will be here to answer your specific questions.

We appreciate your attendance tonight and, most important, value your input. A court reporter is here to record your comments so we can accurately document your input. The court reporter will also record the presentation and question-and-answer session. Additionally, if you prefer to submit your comments in writing, you may use the comment sheets provided tonight. Your comments are due by **September 29, 2006**.

The following information describes the project location, background, purpose and need, Preferred Alternative, and potential environmental consequences. We have also included information on ADOT's next steps in the development process, a list of the Project Team members, and information on where to send your comments by September 29, 2006.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project is located along SR 89A within the town of Clarkdale, the city of Cottonwood, and an unincorporated area of Yavapai County. The project limits are SR 89A from Cement Plant Road at milepost (MP) 349.0, in Clarkdale, east to Black Hills Drive/Verde Heights Drive at MP 351.2, in Cottonwood – a distance of 2.2 miles.



Project Area

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Arizona's State Highway System Log classifies SR 89A as a "minor arterial in a suburban area." Minor arterials are part of the State's principal corridors for statewide travel and provide interstate and intercounty service. According to the ADOT Transportation Planning Division, rural highways such as SR 89A serve high-volume, long-distance trips within Arizona. SR 89A begins north of Prescott along SR 89 and ends at the intersection of Interstate 17 (I-17) south of Flagstaff.

The town of Clarkdale and the city of Cottonwood have experienced substantial growth in recent years, with populations increasing by 60 percent and 55 percent, respectively, between 1990 and 2000. This trend is also reflective of the regional growth, with Yavapai County's population increasing by more than 56 percent during the same time frame. Yavapai County has seen increasing numbers of winter visitors, tourists,

and residents over the past several decades. According to the *Yavapai County General Plan 2003*, the county's population is expected to grow by 44 percent from 2000 to 2020. Similarly, the town of Clarkdale and the city of Cottonwood populations are expected to increase by 40 percent and 66 percent, respectively, from the 2000 populations.

As the growth of Cottonwood and Clarkdale continues, the resulting increase in traffic will require additional roadway capacity. SR 89A carries interstate and intrastate traffic, serves commercial and residential areas, and supports tourism activities near the project area. Constructed in 1966 as the Cottonwood By-Pass Route, the roadway is used as a thoroughfare for traffic heading to numerous destinations, including Sedona and historic Jerome. A substantial number of heavy equipment vehicles associated with the cement plant at the western terminus of the corridor use SR 89A. The segment of SR 89A that includes the project area was evaluated in the 1999 Verde Valley Transportation Study Update. This 1999 transportation study recommended widening this segment of SR 89A from two lanes to four lanes. The *Yavapai County General Plan 2003* proposed widening the roadway to five lanes (two travel lanes in either direction and a continuous center left-turn lane).

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

Clarkdale and Cottonwood have approved several large residential and commercial developments in areas adjacent to this portion of SR 89A. When these developments are completed, more vehicles would use the highway to reach local and regional destinations. The number of vehicles turning onto and merging into SR 89A would correspondingly increase. The average daily traffic (ADT) volume in the project area was 14,500 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2004. The 2026 projection for ADT volumes is estimated at 40,000 vpd. The results of ADOT's Access Control and Capacity Needs Study indicate that SR 89A would need to be at least four lanes by 2026.

Accident data from November 1, 2002, to October 31, 2005, were analyzed for this segment of the SR 89A corridor. There were 22 reported accidents during this three-year period (Table 1). Types of accidents reported on this segment of SR 89A include rear-ending, vehicles colliding at an angle, sideswiping, single vehicle, left-turning, and backing.

Table 1. Summary of accidents from November 1, 2002 to October 31, 2005

Type	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	Total
Property damage	3	4	2	9
Nonfatal injury	5	5	3	13
Total accidents	8	9	5	22

Present conditions provide few passing opportunities, yet the continued presence of large trucks traveling through this section of SR 89A creates a demand for passing these slower-moving vehicles. Over 20 percent of the vehicles on the roadway at the western end of the project area near Cement Plant Road are trucks, while just over 5 percent of the vehicle mix throughout the rest of the project area is trucks. Groups of vehicles traveling close together are characteristic of peak or highest-use travel hours, and slow-moving trucks delay traffic movement. In addition, trucks are turning around on private property near Cement Plant Road and SR 89A once they become aware that they cannot follow SR 89A up to Jerome because of the highway's grade and sharp turns.

The projected 2026 traffic volumes on the highway are anticipated to result in reduced gaps in traffic, which would make entering and exiting SR 89A more difficult. Projected increases in commercial and residential activity would increase the number of vehicles turning onto and off the roadway, which in turn, would increase the potential for turning accidents and congestion. Based on future traffic projections, the existing two-lane facility may delay future emergency response vehicles because of the lack of continuous opportunities to pass other vehicles; the absence of roadway shoulders; and the potential for traffic stoppages, intersection delays, and traffic incidents that block through-travel. Although upgrades have been made to the roadway since it was built in the mid-1960s, projected traffic growth will increase congestion and degrade the current level of service[1] of the roadway over the next 20-plus years if no action is taken. Based on the existing roadway conditions and projected development growth in the area, FHWA and ADOT have identified the need to improve SR 89A to provide for efficient traffic movement.

[1] *Level of Service (LOS) — generally describes roadway operating conditions such as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, and convenience. LOS classifications range from A to F, with A as the best-quality traffic flow and F as the poorest.*

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Based on regional transportation needs and input from the affected agencies, communities, and the public, and considering existing roadway conditions, the objectives of the proposed SR 89A improvements include:

- increase capacity
- maintain an efficient level of service
- provide passing opportunities
- separate opposing directions of traffic for safety
- improve the main intersections to help reduce accidents (anticipated as a result of projected increases in traffic volumes)
- provide for adequate turning movements for trucks

To meet these objectives, the highway section will need to be improved to provide an acceptable capacity and traffic operation for the future anticipated conditions.

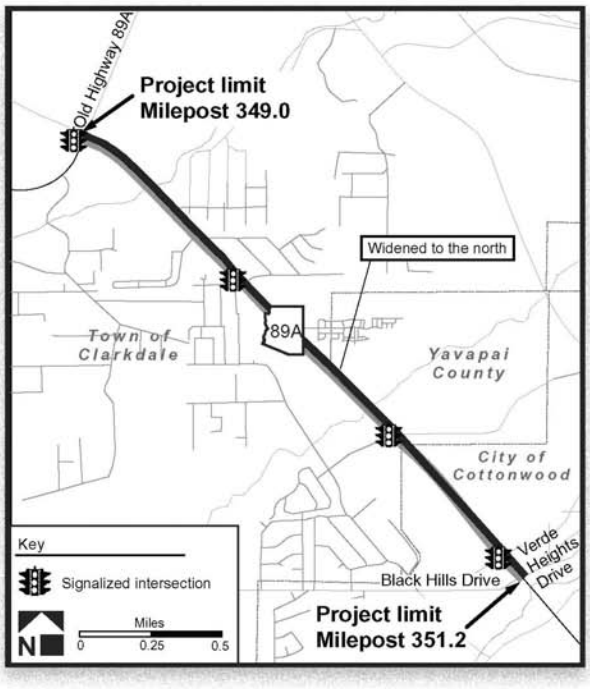
ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would allow only minor improvements, routine maintenance, and pavement resurfacing. The road would remain two lanes throughout the project area, would continue to provide limited passing opportunities, and would not improve traffic operations or increase capacity. Without increasing the capacity of the existing roadway, the increase in traffic over the next 20 years would result in a lower and less desirable level of service and increased congestion. This would result in longer travel times and could impair emergency vehicle response time. This alternative would also limit motorist opportunities to safely pass heavy trucks and other slow-moving vehicles traveling the road. The travel lanes would not be separated and access would not be controlled, which would potentially increase turning, head-on, and rear-end accidents as traffic volumes increase.

Traffic Signal Control Alternative

The Traffic Signal Control Alternative would provide a four-lane highway, with a 16-foot-wide raised median, and signalized traffic control—when warranted—at several intersections within the project area. This alternative would provide right-in/right-out and left-turn movements and stop-sign control at all remaining intersections within the project area that would not warrant a signalized traffic control. The raised median would restrict all left-out movement and allow left-in access to some adjacent commercial and residential parcels. This would increase trip distances to some parcels by approximately 0.5 mile of out-of-direction travel. The raised median would reduce the potential for head-on, run-off-road, or turning accidents.



Traffic Signal Control Alternative

The Traffic Signal Control Alternative was eliminated from further consideration because it would require more right-of-way than the Roundabout Alternative and would increase the potential for more serious injury and fatal accidents (associated with turning movements). Moreover, traffic attempting to make left turns would still be required to cross oncoming travel lanes where vehicles would be traveling at higher speeds than with the Roundabout Alternative.

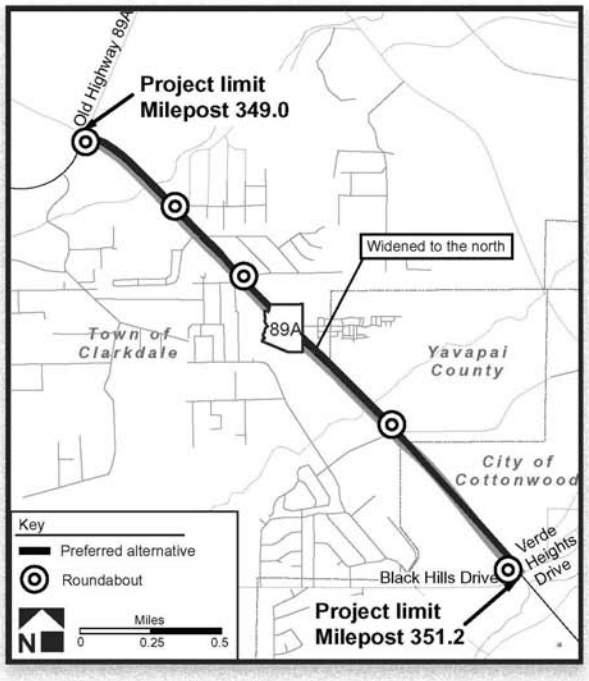
Roundabout Alternative

The Roundabout Alternative would provide a four-lane highway, with an 8-foot-wide raised median, and roundabouts at five of the eight main intersections controlled by yield signs. The roadway would be widened to the north of the existing SR 89A alignment. The narrow median through the project area would reduce right-of-way impacts on adjacent landowners and

would control turning movements for existing and proposed development. The raised median would reduce access to adjacent commercial and residential parcels and increase trip distances to some parcels by approximately 0.5 mile of out-of-direction travel. The raised median would also reduce the potential for head-on, run-off-road, or turning accidents. The Roundabout Alternative may initially result in unexpected or unusual operation for some motorists. This would diminish over time as motorists become more familiar with the presence and operation of the roundabouts. In addition, accidents in roundabouts tend to be less severe than at signalized intersections since vehicles circulate through roundabouts at low speeds (20 to 25 mph).

Preferred Alternative

The Roundabout Alternative was identified as the Preferred Alternative. It would effectively meet the purpose and need to provide for efficient traffic movement. In addition, the Preferred Alternative would accommodate future traffic demands by providing a divided four-lane highway throughout the project corridor while accommodating the need to restrict turning movements to reduce accidents. This alternative would provide for future growth and would meet the transportation needs of Yavapai County as well as the traveling public. Passing opportunities along the roadway would increase and the delays from heavy trucks and vehicles that travel this section of the roadway would be minimized. The roundabouts would reduce traffic speeds in this section of roadway without causing the congestion that often occurs with stopped traffic at signalized intersections. In addition, roundabouts would also decrease the severity and number of accidents at intersections, help regulate traffic flow, and provide an opportunity for trucks to turn around at Cement Plant Road.



Roundabout Alternative (Preferred Alternative)

Typical roundabout configurations

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Draft EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FHWA guidelines to evaluate the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative. Copies of the Draft EA are available at the ADOT Prescott District Office, as well as at the Cottonwood City Clerks Office and Cottonwood Library and Clarkdale Town Clerks Office and Clarkdale Library; the document can also be viewed electronically at < http://www3/EEG_common/documents/sr89a.asp >.

The Draft EA considered the potential environmental issues associated with the proposed project, including the following:

- land use
- social and economic considerations
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act/Environmental Justice
- cultural resources
- air and noise impacts
- visual resources
- biological resources
- water resources
- hazardous materials
- secondary and cumulative impacts

A detailed determination of potential impacts of each of these environmental issues is provided in the Draft EA. The following is a summary of some of the notable potential impacts identified in the Draft EA.

Land Use

The Preferred Alternative would convert approximately 14 acres of private land from its current uses into a permanent transportation facility. Of the 60 total parcels adjacent to the roadway, 28 private parcels representing 16 different property owners would be affected. No residential or commercial structures would be acquired, and affected private property owners would be compensated at market value for property that is acquired in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act, as amended in 1987. Existing land uses would continue after the implementation of the proposed project.

Social and Economic Considerations

Access to adjacent commercial properties would be maintained during construction; however, patronage to businesses along the roadway could be reduced while construction occurs. Short-term economic impacts could include avoidance of construction activities on SR 89A by motorists who would seek alternative routes to their destinations.

Phoenix Cement Plant

The majority of long-term changes would be caused by the improvements related to vehicular access to and from the highway. Raised medians between the roundabouts would limit left-turn movements to specific areas along the highway and would result in out-of-direction travel for motorists seeking access to businesses and social services adjacent to this section of roadway. The medians in the highway would create an increase in travel distance up to one-half mile to and from several of the residential and commercial properties by requiring motorists to travel to the next roundabout that provides a turn around and return to the local businesses on the opposite side of the road. Access to adjacent properties would be maintained, allowing for right-in/right-out traffic movement. Businesses that rely on drop-in patrons to augment the local customer base for a portion of their business would be more likely to experience a loss in revenue than other businesses that are destination businesses. These impacts are not considered to be

Groseta Ranch Road/Scenic Drive Intersection

Pine Shadows Drive

substantial and would be mitigated by the improved mobility and potential for accident reduction. Although the median impedes direct motorist access to some businesses, it allows a greater number of motorists to travel more easily through the retail areas.

The improvements to SR 89A would have a beneficial effect on emergency services to the corridor by providing more efficient traffic operations.

Once the roadway improvements are in place, tourists, local residents, and businesses would benefit by the more efficient and effective traffic operations along SR 89A. The pattern of traffic along the majority of SR 89A would not notably change with the increased capacity of the expanded highway. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative would not have a substantial impact on social and economic resources in the project limits.

Cultural Resources

The cultural resources survey conducted for the project area identified the following sites in the project area: the historic alignments of Old US 89A, abandoned segments of a historic railroad bed, and a prehistoric field house site. After consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, it was determined that no sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are located within the project limits and no historic properties would be adversely affected by the proposed project. The Preferred Alternative would have no impacts on cultural resources sites.

Noise

The projected impacts of traffic noise from construction of the Preferred Alternative were analyzed to identify areas that may be considered for mitigation. The noise was analyzed in accordance with the ADOT Noise Abatement Policy, dated March 21, 2000, and in accordance with the provisions of 23 CFR § 772 — Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise. FHWA's Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) are delineated by land use categories and their associated acceptable exterior noise levels.

Future noise levels in the project area were evaluated at 10 residential land use locations within 500 feet of the existing roadway centerline. These sites were chosen because of their residential land use and/or proximity to the proposed improvements.

With the implementation of the Preferred Alternative, projected noise levels would approach or exceed FHWA's NAC in two locations—the Clarkdale Baptist Church and one commercial site. However, the church has direct access to the highway, which would require gaps in any sound barrier to maintain that access. These openings would limit the effectiveness of any sound barriers; therefore, sound barriers were not recommended for this receiver. As with the church, an effective barrier at the commercial location would eliminate access to the business. Businesses generally prefer visibility from the roadway over noise mitigation; therefore, no mitigation was recommended for the commercial receiver. A final noise analysis and determination of the appropriate noise abatement measures would be completed during final design.

Visual Resources

Although the project would not result in changes to background views, expansion of the highway would create a larger footprint and thus introduce new features, including roundabouts, raised medians, and curb and gutter, in the foreground. The Preferred Alternative would substantially change the existing rural visual character of the landscape to a more urban setting.

Black Hills Drive/Verde Heights Drive

NEXT STEPS

- Public comments are due by **September 29, 2006**
- ADOT and FHWA will evaluate the comments we receive from the public and determine ultimate design in winter 2006
- Final design of roadway begins winter 2006
- Construction programmed in fiscal year 2007

PROJECT TEAM

ADOT and consultant representatives are available at today's meeting to discuss the alternatives being considered for the project and to answer your questions. Representatives from the project team are wearing nametags so that you can easily recognize them.

ADOT

- Orlando Jerez, *Statewide Project Management Group – Project Manager*
- Dallas Hammit, *Prescott District – District Engineer*
- Larry Lindner, *Environmental Planning Group – Environmental Planner*
- Jodi Sorell, *Communication and Community Partnerships*

Town of Clarkdale

- Steve Burroughs, *Public Works Director*

City of Cottonwood

- Tim Costello, *Public Works Director*

Kirkham-Michael

- Steve Martin, *Roadway Engineer*
- Luke Albert, *Roadway Engineer*

Logan Simpson Design Inc.

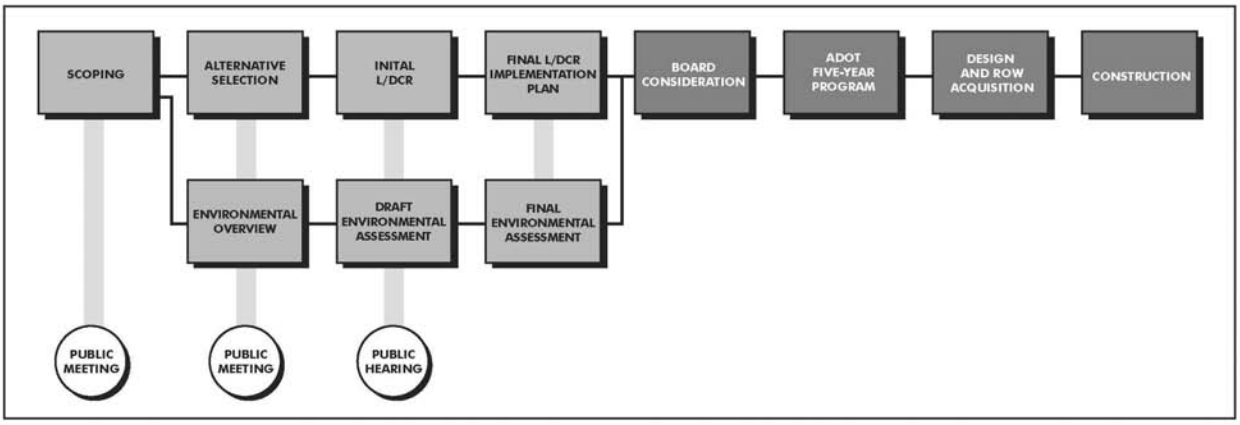
- Diane Simpson-Colebank, *Environmental Planner*
- Patricia McCabe, *Environmental Planner*

YOUR INPUT

The primary objective of the hearing tonight is to obtain your input on the findings of the Draft EA. Please take the time to put your comments in writing on the Comment Sheet or provide your comments to the court reporter. You may leave your comments with us tonight or send them to us by **September 29, 2006**. Please submit your comments to:

Patricia McCabe
Logan Simpson Design Inc.
51 West Third Street, Suite 450
Tempe, Arizona 85281
Fax: (480) 966-9232
E-mail: pmccabe@lsdaz.com

ADOT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS CHART



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